



Ethiopian News

March 2016 Issue

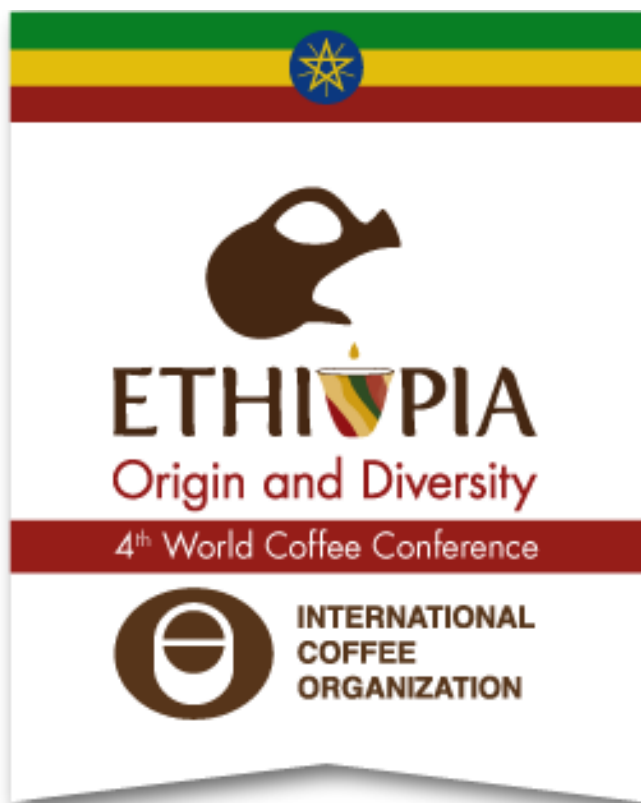


March 6-11, 2016

United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa



ETHIOPIA



4th Coffee Conference successfully completed in Addis

The 4th international coffee conference held at the UN conference centre in Addis Ababa under the theme 'Nurturing Coffee Culture and Diversity', was a resounding success, beating organisers' expectations, said ICC Executive Director, Reboria Olivera Silva.

The three-day event in early March brought together over 1,000 participants from across the industry, including local and international coffee producers, buyers, and representatives from the private sector, international agencies and governments. They discussed the various issues

and challenges related to the coffee sector and considered ways to promote and improve the efficiency and fairness of coffee production.

Speaking at the conference on Monday 7th March, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said: “A fair distribution of the proceeds from coffee is not only a matter of improving the lives of coffee farmers and their families, but it is also essential to maintaining [a] sustainable supply of the highest quality beans.”

He also noted that challenges confronting the coffee industry included rising temperature, decline in rainfall and increased resilience of plant and pest diseases. The Executive Director of the conference, Reborio Olivera Silva, added that poor infrastructure and technology presented problems to the sector. He called on African governments to encourage private sector investment to help coffee production in Africa.

The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Erastus Mwencha, stressed that Africa’s coffee industry was vulnerable to climate change and price fluctuations and that this vulnerability needed to end.

During the conference a panel discussion under the title ‘Towards a Diverse and Sustainable Coffee Culture’ was held, offering insights into coffee practices and sectors around the world. Mr Fred Kawuma, Secretary General of the Inter-African Coffee Organisation highlighted the need to encourage domestic consumption of coffee in order to create a more diverse coffee culture. He also suggested that increased public-private partnerships would make the industry more sustainable. Mr Roberto Velez, CEO of the National Federation of Coffee Growers offered insights into coffee in Colombia where, he said, 20 million people in 15 states rely on the industry for their livelihoods. Speaking for the Chinese Coffee Association, Ms Jingya Fu suggested that promotion of coffee ceremonies could result in the improved image of coffee producing countries in the same way the tea ceremony in China improved China’s image. She also noted that making coffee more affordable in consumer countries would lead to a more diverse coffee culture. Mr Carlos Brando, an independent coffee expert from Brazil, advised that more development work would improve the sustainability of the coffee industry and that



farmers should be more focused on this sustainability rather than profitability or branding.

Mr Abdullah Bagersh, Board Chairman of the African Fine Coffee Association spoke specifically about Ethiopia, underlining the growing coffee culture in the country and how mounting domestic consumption of coffee is promoting a burgeoning urban coffee culture.

Did you know?

- Coffee accounts for 25% of Ethiopia's total export earnings
- Ethiopia and Uganda are the only two African countries who have experienced no decline in coffee production
- Ethiopia is among the top 5 coffee producing nations in the world and has a target of becoming the second largest in the next 5-7 years.
- The world consumes nearly 500 billion cups of coffee a year
- Close to 90% of the known varieties of Arabica can be found in Ethiopia.



Delegates from the conference also visited coffee producing areas of Ethiopia on a two-day tour to Yirgacheffe in Gedeo Zone and Sidama Zone in South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples State. Members of the delegation were drawn from various countries including Canada, China, Germany, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, South Korea and USA. On the first day of the tour Ferro Farmers Cooperative was visited and discussions were held with cooperative members. On the second day the group visited a smallholders' garden farm in Yirgacheffe and the Konga Farmers Cooperative.

On 12th March, Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom met with Reboria Olivera Silva to discuss the successful hosting of the conference.

In related news, Brazil and Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen trade and investment between the two countries who hope to learn a lot from each other's coffee producing practices.



Italian President visits Ethiopia

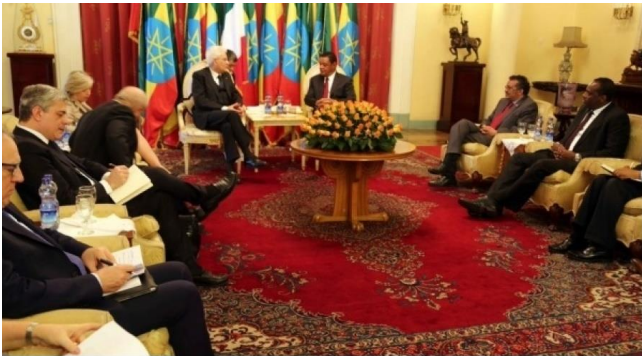
Between 13th and 17th March, the Italian President Sergio Mattarella led a delegation to Ethiopia in the first visit from an Italian President in 20 years. The visit signified the excellent bilateral relations currently enjoyed between Italy and Ethiopia in many sectors.

The President was joined by the Minister of Education, University and Research, Stefania Giannini, and by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mario Giro. During the trip, the President met with both the President of Ethiopia, Mulatu Teshome, and Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn in order to discuss economic partnerships, regional stability, migration and cultural and academic cooperation.



President Mattarella also met with the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Abune Mathias 1, who stressed that Ethio-Italian relations needed to be based on fraternity and mutual understanding.

The two discussed the possibility of Italian support for more conservation of historical sites and antiquities.



The President told ENA that he was interested in supporting the development and exploiting the opportunities of industrial parks in Ethiopia. He praised Ethiopia's effort in providing military, diplomatic and mediatory roles in the region and, as the current chair of IGAD's partner forum, Italy stated it would support Ethiopia's efforts to maintain regional peace.

While visiting Ethiopia, President Matterella met with Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma with the hope of broadening and deepening Italy's relationship with the African Union. They spoke about the advancement of the development agenda of the continent inscribed in Africa Agenda 2063. The two stressed the importance of Italy as a member of the EU in its work with the AU.



The President also visited Gambella refugee camp and the rock-hewn churches at Lalibela.

RwandAir and Ethiopian Airlines agree to share the skies

Silas Udahemuka, Rwanda's RCAA Director General, and Gobena Guangul, Deputy Director General of Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (pictured left and right below), have signed an air service agreement allowing the opening of their airspace to each other's national carriers.



It is understood that all air service operations will take place under the Fifth Freedom Arrangement which gives the airlines the right to carry passengers from one country to another, and from that country on to a third one (in Africa). Now RwandAir can fly to Addis without restrictions and Ethiopian can do the same to Kigali.

The deal also means that the airlines have no restrictions on the frequency of flights per week for both cargo and passenger services and, according to Gobena Guangul, the door has been opened for code sharing arrangements between the two airlines.

Ethiopian Airlines profits soar

Ethiopian Airlines Enterprise, Africa's largest carrier by revenue, increased its profit by 12% to 3.53 billion Ethiopia birr (\$165.4 million) in 2014-15, despite declining air traffic on the continent.

The fiscal crisis in African oil producers, a result of the falling crude price, the effects of the Ebola crisis on travel and instability in Africa and the Middle East weighed the industry down, Chief Executive Officer Tewolde Gebremariam said.

“The year was characterized by a challenging operating environment,” he said in the company’s annual report.

Ethiopian Airlines was able to keep growing by managing its spending and selling services including catering, ground handling and aircraft maintenance to other airlines which helped maintain profitability, he said. The group, which also operates Togo’s ASKY Airlines and Malawian Airlines, is aiming for \$10 billion revenue in about a decade.

Operating revenue increased 6% from a year earlier to 49.5 billion birr in the fiscal year that ended on 7th July, the company said.

The state-owned company ordered 20 Boeing 737 MAX 8s worth more than \$2.1 billion, and has the option to purchase 15 more, it said. The carrier said it has “long-term loans” of 47.3 billion birr. The Ethiopian government has exempted the airlines from paying income tax.

Professor Alex de Waal gives seminar

This March, Ethiopia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs Policy Research and Analysis Department’s monthly political lunch seminar was hosted by Professor Alex de Waal, considered one of the world’s leading experts on the Horn of Africa, under the theme ‘*The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*’.



During the seminar, Alex de Waal praised Ethiopia’s strategy in containing the subversive effect of Eritrea in the region as successful. He also honoured former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for

building strong, impersonal institutions that would deliver great economic growth. He praised the late Prime Minister as a “genuine thinker”.

Professor De Waal also urged the government to invest heavily in education in order to promote a strong intellectual democratic developmental state.

Insurance for smallholder farmers is launched

The Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), which enables smallholder farmers to cope better with weather-related risks, has been launched.

The farmers will pay a risk premium of approximately 10% of the total cost of the inputs into their crops, including fertiliser, seeds, herbicides and pesticides. If the crop fails, then the farmer will receive 100% of his or her investment from the Ethiopian Insurance Corporation. Studies show that currently farmers in Ethiopia spend, on average, 2,500-3,000 birr on inputs per season.

Speaking at the launch of the scheme, the Public Financial Enterprises Agency General Director, Sintayehu W/Michael, said that the insurance would contribute to sustainable development by working towards reducing and ultimately ending farmers’ reliance on aid whenever there is a weather-related problem.

The Ethiopian Insurance Corporation CEO, Ato Yewendeson Eitefa, noted that the insurance scheme has taken into account the illiteracy levels of some farmers and uses technology platforms, working with co-operatives and micro-finance institutions as agents for the corporation close to the farmers.

A study of the programme was conducted over the last three years and is now ready to be piloted in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ region by 200,000 farmers. It is hoped that in the coming five years some 15 million smallholder farmers will be covered by the scheme and that a similar scheme will be implemented for livestock farmers.

Editorial: Ethiopia's bid for UNSC membership



Ethiopia's bid for a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council is gaining momentum. Following the endorsement of the African Union at the last Summit in January 2016, a number of countries have declared their support and expressed their confidence that Ethiopia will be a worthy member of the Council. For example, the Italian President Matterella, Brazil's Foreign Minister, Mauro Viera, and the Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Li Yifan, have all expressed their countries' support for Ethiopia's candidacy.

As a founding member of the United Nations, Ethiopia has faithfully accompanied the Organisation in its eventful journey of the past 71 years which are characterised by challenges to resolve the political, economic and social problems encountered by many countries and peoples in all corners of the world. The solution to these problems often requires the active participation and dedicated support of member states. In this regard, Ethiopia can look back with satisfaction and point to the valuable contribution it has been making to the endeavours of the United Nations in peacekeeping, sustainable development and climate change, just to name a few.

With regard to peacekeeping, Ethiopia's participation in peacekeeping missions, which started in the 1950s in Korea, has continued today in Darfur and Abyei. In fact, with its contribution of over 12,700 peacekeepers to UN and AU peacekeeping operations, Ethiopia is currently the largest troop contributor in the world. Membership of the UNSC will provide Ethiopia with the opportunity to share its valuable experiences in peacekeeping and regional conflict resolution.

When the UN launched the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, very few people expected Ethiopia to stand out as one of the top performers. However, the impressive results in 2015 shows that Ethiopia did not only meet almost all the MDGs, but also demonstrated its resolve to fight poverty, disease and ignorance. The country has now embarked on the Sustainable Development Goals with the same vigour.

The challenge of standing up to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change requires a global effort in which Ethiopia has been playing its part. The execution of huge reforestation schemes and the implementation of renewable energy generation programmes have been so successful that Ethiopia is becoming the renewable energy hub of the Continent.

It, therefore, did not come as a surprise that Ethiopia's bid for UNSC membership is enthusiastically supported by so many countries. Ethiopia will certainly live up to their expectations. It will make a valuable contribution to the effort the Organisation is making to ensure a better future for humanity.

Israeli Bank Finance Sugar Project



Israeli Bank Hapoalim has concluded a \$200 million plus deal to finance an irrigation project in Ethiopia, now under construction by an Israeli firm called Netfim. The project is a government owned sugar company and extends over 7,000 hectares of sugar cane. Netafim says it is the firm's largest deal ever.

The Ethiopian Government is the guarantor of the finance, which is provided as buyers' credit. The finance will be transferred directly to Netafim as payment for exports. The loan is expected to be paid in 9 and a half years. Netafim, which has 17 factories and 4,300 employees worldwide, noted that this was similar to projects they have carried out in India, South Africa, Brazil and Peru.

Jovago, AXA partnership invests 75 million Euros

Jovago, one of the top hotel booking websites in Africa, and Axa, a worldwide leader in Insurance and Asset management, have announced a partnership. Jovago explained they are looking "to develop the expansion of Jovago and a new round of funding to boost its activities in Africa and further ensure the expansion of the business to booming markets and the strengthening of the brand in the existing branches of major cities across Africa to meet the needs of travellers."



Axa will invest 75 million Euros and own approximately 8% of the capital of AIG, parent company of Jovago. "This is exciting news [for] Ethiopia to boost Jovago activities and to connect with the global advanced systems that will bring economic development and knowledge transfer.", Alexander Burtenshaw, Country Manager of Jovago Ethiopia said. Jovago "will continue its provision of a secure platform to increase the visibility of even the most remote hotels, improve service quality, facilitate the movement of travellers and promote profitability for their businesses, breaking the barrier to travel and making it more easy and affordable in Africa." "AXA's support will be key to accomplishing this success." said Paul Midy, Jovago's CEO.

Since its creation in 2013 and the opening of its first offices in Africa, Jovago has been growing steadily. Its Inventory, the largest in Africa, lists 25,000 hotels in over 40 African countries, over 500 hotels in Ethiopia and 200,000 hotels worldwide.

Packaging industry lags behind in Ethiopia as investors flock to agro-processing



Ethiopia's fast growing agro-processing industry is facing a major packaging shortage, State Minister of Industry Mebratu Meles said this month, when addressing delegates of German companies that specialise in food processing and packaging. "We envisage being the leading nation in Africa in light manufacturing industries, which primarily uses agricultural raw materials. As part of transforming our agriculture, we have now divided the country into 17 agro-processing corridors (industrial parks). Out of this, we expect to commence the construction of four by next October," he added.

In the last twenty years, thousands of investors have been attracted to agro-processing, because of strong incentives such as tax free import of machinery and export duty exemptions, low-cost labour and land lease prices. Over 11,000 foreign investors and joint ventures registered to invest in agro-processing in Ethiopia between 1994 to July 2015. But at least half these have not been fully realised partly because of the lack of good quality food packing materials. Most companies currently import ready-made packaging from abroad for biscuits, pasta, juices, cooking oil and milk. If

imports are held up, the food processing companies are forced to stop production of their products.

To fill this gap, the commercial section of the German Embassy in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (ECCSA) and Ethiopia Invest, a private trade promotion company, brought 17 German companies specialized in manufacturing and supply of food processing and packaging machinery to Addis. “We are here to learn about the industry in Ethiopia and introduce our technologies,” said Richard Clemens, Managing Director of VDMA Food Processing and Packaging Machinery Association, which has supplied 518 million Euros-worth of machinery to Africa, which is 7% of their global export volume.

Ethiopia launches microbiology project to serve East African region



In early March, Ethiopia inaugurated a modern microbiology laboratory which will focus on transboundary animal diseases and diseases passing from animals to humans, and vice versa. The 37 million birr facility, based in Sebeta town in the Oromia region, is equipped with state-of-the-art technology worth over 100 million birr the Director of the Centre, Dr Mesfin Sahle, has said.

The laboratory will build domestic capability in responding to such diseases, especially Avian influenza and other poultry diseases afflicting East African countries. Aside from just Ethiopia, after approval from the Food and Agricultural Organisation and the World Organisation for Animal Health, many other East African nations are

set to benefit from referral services including: Burundi, Djibouti, DRC, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The State Minister of Livestock Development and Fisheries, Dr Gebregzabihier Gebreyohannes, noted that the laboratory will really allow Ethiopia to tap into its rich livestock resources - currently Ethiopia has the largest cattle population in Africa. Key tasks of the centre include inspection of trans-boundary diseases, health certification of export cattle, improving species and building the capacity of regional veterinary laboratories. All of these will contribute to a stronger livestock industry in Ethiopia.

Space Science to advance knowledge-based economic development

The Ethiopian Space Science Society have officially handed over the Entoto Observatory and Research Centre to the Ministry of Science and Technology, in order to maximise the contribution of space science to the growth of the national economy.

At the handing over ceremony, the State Minister for Science and Technology, Dr Eng Getahun Mekuria, stated that science and technology can greatly increase Ethiopia’s competitiveness and economic development. He added that to fully achieve the government’s development plans, Ethiopia needs to build a stronger knowledge-based economy which is built on science, technology, information and learning.



Tefera Wolwa, the Society Patron and Centre Board Chairman, said that “the Centre offered a unique opportunity for the next generation of Ethiopian

scientists to pursue advanced studies” in subjects such as astronomy, astrophysics and remote sensing.

Although there is a growing realisation from universities and public donors that space science is a vital aspect of Ethiopia’s future economic development, there is currently limited finance available for the space programme, said the Chairman. It is his hope that by transferring the Centre to the government, satellites will become operational much quicker, and space science in Ethiopia can truly advance nationwide.

Addis to be risk assessed for earthquakes

On 9th March, the Addis Ababa City Administration and the Global Earthquake Model (GEM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding facilitating future work together to assess the threat posed by earthquakes to Addis Ababa.

As a city which is vastly and quickly expanding, which hosts the headquarters of the AU, and which is located close to the Rift Valley, it is vital that Addis Ababa is subject to this kind of assessment, said Addis Ababa Municipality General Manager, Haile Fesseha. Currently, he noted, there is no such institution monitoring or detecting threats to Addis despite the fact the city has suffered from earthquakes before.

Haile also said that after the assessment had been completed an institution would be established for both monitoring risk and responding to earthquakes. The outcome of the assessment is expected in June 2016.

Solar Mini-grid at Woldia University first of its kind

A 100mw solar PV mini-grid plant, the first of its kind, is being constructed at Woldia University, in Ethiopia’s North Wollo region, under an international public private initiative (PPI).

Woldia University is engaging with a consortium of energy developers - SANROY-GTDC (Ethiopia and USA) and AIB Stimaken (France and Kenya) - to provide stable, renewable power for itself and for the rapidly expanding city of Woldia. Established in 2008, the publicly-owned University, which currently has almost 10,000 students and 1,000 staff, is developing a reputation for quality education and visionary leadership.

The University will establish an independent solar-based mini-grid, complemented with sustainable energy storage, to ensure a 24-hour renewable power supply. The new mini-grid will provide uninterrupted, and fully-carbon neutral power for the university and support the effective operations of a modern medical school. It will be constructed in modules and can be expanded to a maximum 100mw of installed capacity. At first meeting the University’s energy needs, over the next couple of years, it will expand to power industry and transport in Woldia city.



The University aims to become one of the top twenty universities in Africa. “This plan will help not only the University, but also the city by enhancing its economic activities that are halted by power failure” said Professor Yalew Endawoke, President of Woldia University.

The consortium is led by Dr Yonnas Kefle of GTDC who is optimistic that the project will be a good model for institutions of higher learning in Africa, and will unlock a lot of interesting hybrid renewable energy models.



“Lessening the power demand on the national grid is a key aspect of this project” said Woldia City Mayor Tsehayu Mengesha. “The project fits with our plan to develop Woldia as an important hub in Northern Ethiopia.”

Track laying for Awash-Kombolch-Woldia to start



The Ethiopian Railways Corporation (ERC) has announced that track laying for the Awash-Kombolch-Woldia/Hara Gebeya railway project will start in April. Their Communications Head, Dereje Tefera, said the project was launched back in October 2014 and it is now 33% complete. The railway stretches for 390km and costs an estimated \$1.7 billion. The contractor is a Turkish company and the railway will connect the northern and central parts of Ethiopia and comprise 145 tunnels, 65 bridges, 3 terminals along with 6 intermediate stations. The project is set to reach completion in three and a half years and has created more than 2,800 jobs. During the second Growth and Transformation Plan period (GTP II), Ethiopia plans to construct 5,000km of new railway lines.

Angolan Unitel Data Roaming Reaches Ethiopia

Unitel, an Angolan mobile operator, is providing data roaming services in Ethiopia, strengthening the presence of the network in Africa. A press release from Luanda stated that the company is committed to ensuring good quality comprehensive service improvement to its customers. In February, Unitel provided its data roaming service to two new destinations, Ethiopia and Aruba, through partnerships with local operators Ethio Telecom and Setar, respectively.



Ethiopia plans new 2,000mw dam

Ethiopia, which plans to become a top regional electricity exporter, will soon launch a new 2,000MW hydropower dam, Prime Minister Hailemariam announced, during his regular briefing of Ethiopia’s parliament.



PM Dessalegn at the parliament

Under a new 2015-2020 development plan, Addis Ababa wants to raise output to 17,346mw from a current capacity of just over 2,200, from hydropower, wind and geothermal sources. Ethiopia’s bid to tap several rivers for power generation will boost manufacturing and industrialise its agrarian economy, the PM said.

PM Hailemariam said Ethiopia, which signed a \$4 billion deal with U.S.-Icelandic firm, Reykjavik Geothermal, in 2013 for construction of a 1,000mw geothermal plant which will be the country’s first privately-run utility, is in negotiations with other international companies to build more power generating projects.

Once Ethiopia’s grand plans are complete, it wants to export power to additional neighbouring countries, to north and south Africa and beyond.

GERD: Enhancing Savings Culture, National Development



The Ethiopian government is taking measures to boost savings in financial institutions and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is playing a key role in enhancing the savings culture and supporting overall national economic development, said the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation in the Construction of the GERD. The Council held a Consultative Workshop in mid-March on the theme: "*The Role of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the Ethiopian Renaissance, enhancing the savings culture in Ethiopia.*"

Scholars from Bahir Dar, Jimma and the Civil Service Universities presented their studies for discussion with stakeholders, focusing on the trend of total revenue generated through various self-financing strategies, and the role of the domestic and Diaspora community contributions in financing the GERD.

Minister of Communications and Coordinator of the Finance and Economy cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, said the GERD has "helped improve the savings culture, supporting national growth." Jimma University, Business and Economics College Dean, Dr Wondaferahu Mulugeta, said the government is also financing the GERD through attracting financial support from the Diaspora.

Over the past four and half years, a total of nearly 7.6 billion Birr, or \$410 million, has been raised

from employee contributions through the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) and 7 Micro-finance Institutions (MFIs) in the country. Of these, about 3.46 billion Birr was raised from employee contributions and 4.02 billion Birr from direct sale of Bonds, both at home and abroad. The CBE remains the major financial institution in terms of mobilizing finance from employees' contributions and direct bond sales. But construction will require \$4.7 billion.

The highest amount of finance raised for the project was 2,845.33 million Birr in 2011/12 (37.62% of the revenue raised that year). But fund-raising dropped 2012/13 and 2013/14 to 1,516.63 million Birr and 1,188.28 million Birr respectively, mainly from a huge decline in revenue from direct bond sales at home, but this decline showed signs of recovery in 2014/15 when 1,474.38 million Birr was raised.

Dr Wondaferahu said the total facevalue of bonds issued by seven MFIs increased significantly from 18.29 million Birr in 2013 to 72.8 million Birr in 2015. In all, MFIs have mobilized about 174.79 million Birr from direct bond sales to the rural community. The four largest MFIs - Amhara, Dedit, Oromia, and Omo credit and saving institutions - had mobilized about 167.7 million Birr for the GERD by the end of 2014/15.

Bahir Dar University assistant professor, Dr Ermias Ashagre, said the GERD introduced new ways of mobilizing domestic resources such as the Diaspora bond, Renaissance Dam Bond and a Cell-phone compatible lottery system ("send A to 8100") so that citizens at all levels of society could participate in the development process. The GERD has established a sense of self-confidence among citizens about "this potentially rewarding project."

He said the dam had introduced a 24-hour, 3-shift system for the construction work, which is new to Ethiopia. People have also learned about the possibilities for change and the power of a single contribution to achieve common goals.

Civil Service University Income Tax and Customs Administration Institute assistant professor, Dr Abdu Muhammed, said employees had paid the lion's share in financing GERD through bond purchase – over 46% of the total collected.



Today, the GERD is a rallying point where there is an explicit shared vision among the population and potential investors. But, the fund mobilized from the Diaspora community showed a decreasing trend from 2011/12 to 2014/15. This implies that the resources mobilized from those means became unsustainable so it is essential to strengthen and promote the growth of financial institutions and strengthen transparency in the use of funds generated through bond sales and donations, and build accountability to national residents and then Diaspora community.

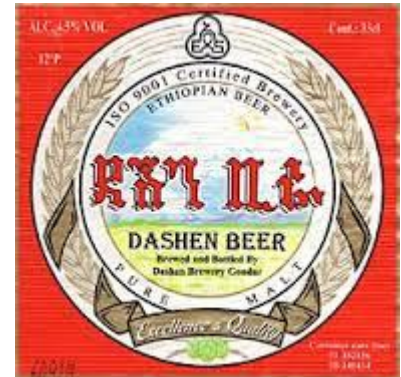
150 Buses to Commence Operation by May in Addis

Around 150 Sheger City Buses will start operations in Ethiopia's capital by May, Addis Ababa's Road and Transport Bureau has announced. A contract for the purchase of 300 buses, costing 1.1 billion Birr was concluded between the Addis Ababa City Administration and Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC), an Ethiopian company. Head of the Transport Bureau, Yabebal Addis, said the city administration will take delivery of 150 buses by May, with the remaining 150 buses arriving by July. The 42-seat buses have global positioning systems and security cameras. They are designed to be comfortable for pregnant women, children and

people with disabilities and can carry more than 100 commuters.

Dashen Brewery pledge cultural centre for Oromia

Dashen Brewery announced at a ceremony in late February that, as part of their corporate social responsibility strategy, they would be donating 2 million birr to a cultural centre for Oromia.



At the event, Mekbib Alemu, Deputy Manager of the Brewery, presented the cheque and said "We are very proud to support the age-old Oromo Gada System in the effort to pass the culture to the next generation. We have such a wonderful culture and system and we are ready to contribute more."

Ethiopia went green for St Patrick's Day



To celebrate St Patrick's Day, the Addis Ababa light railway turned green for the first time! The railway joined monuments from all over the world on 19th March, helping to celebrate the Irish patron saint's day. Other monuments included the London Eye, the Great Wall of China, and the Christ the Redeemer Statue in Rio de Janeiro.

Almaz Ayana wins New African Woman in sport award



In March Almaz Ayana was honoured with an award from New African Woman for her achievements in sport at an event held at the Andaz Hotel in London, UK, under the patronage of the African Development Bank.

During the 2015 Beijing Championships she won the 5,000m with a world-leading PB of 14:14:32 and also won the African Championships in Marrakech and 2014 IAAF Diamond League meeting in Shanghai.

Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission, was also honoured at the event as the first woman to ever lead the African Union. She has championed women's issues at the organisation ensuring that they are always included in discussions and initiatives.

Ethiopia in London

Mr Beyene meets with Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance

On 4th March Mr Fekadu Beyene, Minister Counsellor Diaspora Affairs and Chargé d'Affaires of the Ethiopian Embassy in London, met with Dr Steven Connor, the Executive Director for Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA), and the International Programmes and Fundraising Manager, Mr Jose de la Cruz.

WHPCA is a non-governmental organisation which focuses on hospice and palliative care development around the world, including Ethiopia. WHPCA's plan to partner with local organisations in Ethiopia and the Ministry of Health was discussed and ultimately supported by Mr Beyene. He has pledged to support

the plan by linking the organisation with diaspora groups and UK-based companies working in Ethiopia.

At the meeting Mr de la Cruz said: "We are grateful for the pledge of support from the Ethiopian Embassy, which will help improve the health outcomes for those living with life limiting illnesses and in need of palliative care."

EthioTelecom honoured at European Business Assembly forum



On 22nd March, Ethio Telecom Chief Executive Officer, Ato (Mr) Andualem Admassie Abate, attended the European Business Assembly forum, an interactive platform for international collaboration which was attended by businessmen, financiers, diplomats, leaders of chambers of commerce, business associations and business and professional unions from more than 60 countries.

Ato Andualem Admassie Abate was honoured with two awards at the event. He first received the 'United Europe Award' in recognition of the company's contribution to the development of international integration.

The main award criteria include:

- International relations development
- Support of region promotion and social projects
- Presence in different international and regional organisations and networks
- Effective international economic activities

The second award he received was the 'International Socrates Award' in recognition of the intellectual development of today's society.



The main award criteria include:

- Professional experience and achievements
- Global influence on social and economic progress

Ethiopia in the News

Ethiopian prime minister: 'We are an island of stability in a troubled region'



On 9th March, *The Guardian* newspaper carried an interview with Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, who said "the key to keeping the peace in Ethiopia is a tooth-and-nail fight against poverty."

Reed Kramer interviewed the prime minister after a US-Africa business summit in Addis Ababa in February and explored with the PM his government's success in meeting the millennium development goals and asked how Ethiopia was progressing with the sustainable development goals (SDGs).



The PM said Ethiopia had met all but one MDG and would continue to make similar progress in the coming 15 years with the SDGs. He said progress was made because people were fully integrated into the system. "In health, for example, women are very active in the process, our farmers are very active (70% of the population). If young people are engaged, then we can achieve."

The PM said securing the country is "the topmost priority" and "There is tolerance within our community, Muslims and Christians living together in harmony. We put people at the centre of securing

the country. You can't secure your country with only a security apparatus and missiles... poverty is the worst enemy that brings insecurity... The more you reduce the poverty rate, the more secure the country will be. If you are secure at home and your people are free from poverty, then it's possible to secure the country. That's the philosophy we're using, and the results to date are very good."

Concerning the recent protests in Oromia, the PM said "the root cause is not politics. It is having so many young people who are unemployed. Even though we have tried our best, we haven't [fully] addressed the unemployment problem in Oromia and in other parts of the country. It is higher among the youth, and 70% of our population is below the age of 30. The recent protest was triggered by unemployed youths. We want to focus on young people and create jobs as quickly as possible...both in self-employment and in wage employment. If we don't do that, then unrest will be there."

"The second issue, which created this problem, is the lack of good governance" the PM said, "especially at the grassroots [in Oromia]. Farmers were evicted from their land without proper legal process. Those who take the land in a corrupt way, working with some private sector people, [were] evicting farmers, and the farmers resent [it]. The government has been addressing unemployment and lack of good governance by "engaging the people [since the riots] to solve the problems as quickly as possible. Now the unrest has settled, because we discussed [with] them properly."

Concerning criticism of Ethiopia's human rights record and the right to dissent, the PM said "Every country is criticised, including the US, on human rights. But as a fledgling democracy, we have much more difficulty. The training and the change in attitude [required] to shift from the undemocratic culture [Ethiopia had] for many years to a democratic way of thinking is a very difficult job. Building democratic culture will take some time. But we are on the right track. It's improving."

The PM said “Ethiopia follows a developmental democratic state system of governance where government has to intervene in a specialised way in the economy. Many neo-liberals, he said, do not like it. We have ideological conflict with those who criticise us. They want to prove that this system is wrong by bombarding Ethiopia and its leaders [with criticism]. When we have a problem, it’s exaggerated because they want to prove that their ideology is correct.”

On the current drought, the PM said “The government has long invested on building resiliency of our people in those [worst hit] areas through a safety net programme that has helped withstand the shocks for quite some time now. The early warning system and the strategic grain reserve we had built over the years have also gone a long way in giving us a fighting chance throughout the last few seasons, but international attention is lagging. The response to date has not been sufficient.” If “the lacklustre response continues”, he said, “the government will take every step necessary to avert humanitarian disaster, including diverting funds from other priorities, if that is what it takes.”

See here to read the full interview <http://goo.gl/8tYFam>

Sylvia Pankhurst: from suffragette to a patriot’s grave, in Ethiopia

South China Morning Post On 17th March, *South China Morning Post* covered the extraordinary life of Sylvia Pankhurst in an article by British journalist James Jeffries, based on an interview he conducted with Sylvia’s son Richard Pankhurst who lives in Addis Ababa.

Though she was famous for “Votes for Women”, few are aware that, as the article states, Sylvia also “took up the cause” of Ethiopia “with a passion she passed on to her son Richard, who has devoted his life to promoting Ethiopia and documenting its history.”

Sylvia had witnessed fascist brutality while studying art in Italy and became “a vocal pacifist, anti-fascist and anti-colonialist activist in the 1920s and 1930s”. “When Italy began increasing its military presence in East Africa, she proved to be one of Ethiopia's most vocal supporters, writing to newspapers in defence of the nation's sovereignty.”

Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, and Emperor Haile Selassie fled and was exiled in England. “Failure of the League of Nations to intercede only spurred her on.” This did not endear her to the Foreign Office which called her “Busybody Miss Pankhurst” in internal correspondence.

In London Sylvia founded a newspaper *The New Times and Ethiopia News* which, after she and Richard moved to Ethiopia, became a popular monthly, the *Ethiopia Observer*. Sylvia strongly objected to the continuing British administration of Ethiopia's southeastern Ogaden region, and British intelligence services kept an eye on her. Richard remembers his mother saying she would continue to lobby until the British left, which they did in 1954. Sylvia died of a heart attack in Addis Ababa in 1960, at the age of 78, her health irrevocably impaired by numerous hunger and sleep strikes during her suffragette campaigns of the early 20th century. “She told me that sleep strikes were most effective for making you so ill you had to be released from

prison,” says Sylvia’s daughter-in-law Rita. Sylvia received a state funeral, at which Haile



Selassie named her an honorary Ethiopian, and was buried in front of Addis Ababa's Trinity Cathedral - the only non-Ethiopian among the graves of patriots of the Italian war.



Richard Pankhurst has inherited the campaigning spirit of his mother. He is proud of having led the campaign for the 2005 return of a giant obelisk taken by the Italians to Rome from the northern Ethiopian city of Axum. He hasn't succeeded, however, in restoring to Ethiopia the 349 manuscripts that are currently residing in London's British Library.

In related news, Britain has at long last decided to honour Sylvia Pankhurst, with a statue of her to be erected in Clerkenwell, London.

You can find the full article here <http://goo.gl/iw8gHd>

25 artists from around the world you need to know right now



UK music publication *Fader* published an article last month highlighting new and exciting talent from around the world. They picked 25 artists to introduce to their following. One of these artists was Ethiopia's Mikael Seifu.



He is based in Addis Ababa, having attended music school in the USA, and experiments with traditional Ethiopian influences mixed with 'mind-expanding electronic sounds'. On 5th March he released 'Zelalem' (translating roughly to 'eternity') which contains 5 tracks including 'How to Save a Life'.

Seifu describes his sound as 'Ethiopian Electronic', including folk instruments such as the Krar and the Masenko.

Read the full article here: <http://goo.gl/qf0L9r>
Listen to his track here: <http://goo.gl/hvkd66>

Enchanting Ethiopia



In March, *Africa Geographic* printed a story on Ethiopian tourism in the Simien Mountains. Sarah Kingdom, the writer, describes Ethiopia as "an experience like no other". She was completely "blown away" by her trip and says that "stunning scenery, incredibly rare wildlife, amazing people, and history and culture combine to make it a must-visit destination."

She also discusses the animals endemic to the country and region, including the Walia Ibex, Ethiopian wolves and the Gelada Baboons. "Geladas", she said, "are amazing and intelligent 'old world' monkeys; the males have vampire-like canines, which they bare frequently, and golden manes that wouldn't look out of place in a shampoo commercial!"

Kingdom gushed not just about the Simiens, but the "impressive royal enclosure of castles and palaces" at Gondar, and Lalibela, which has "lost none of its power to incite awe".

She finishes the article by saying: "One thing's for certain - whatever you choose to do or however you choose to do it, a trip to this magical country in the Horn of Africa will be sure to leave you mesmerised."



Photo included in article and taken by LimaLimo Lodge

Read the full article here: <http://goo.gl/2Xl08k>